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ILLINOIS MAN SENTENCED TO 20 YEARS
FOR ATTEMPTED PRODUCTION OF CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

Tampa, FL - U.S. Attorney A. Brian Albritton announces that U.S. District Judge Virginia Hernandez Covington yesterday sentenced Warren J. Harder (age 64, of Crystal Lake, Illinois) to 20 years in federal prison for attempted production of child pornography. Harder had pleaded guilty on December 21, 2009.

According to court documents, Harder chatted online for more than a year with an undercover U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) special agent, whom he believed to be a 14 year old girl. During the chats, Harder repeatedly requested that the girl take sexually explicit photographs of intimate parts of her body and e-mail them to him. Harder sent the "girl" a digital camera through the U.S. mail to take the pictures. He also e-mailed sexually explicit photographs of adult women to show the "girl" how to pose in the photographs. And Harder e-mailed with his intentions to travel to Florida and engage in explicit sexual encounters with the child.

When Harder was arrested, a search of his computer revealed hundreds of images of child pornography and chats with numerous other underage individuals. Harder had used MySpace.com, Yahoo!.com, and Tagged.com to establish online profiles, contact underage girls, and participate in sexually explicit chats. Further investigation revealed

that, between 2007 and 2009, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children Cyber Tip Line (see contact information below) had received more than a dozen complaints about someone who was engaging in sexually explicit conversations online with girls under the age of 18, that traced back to e-mail accounts used and maintained by Harder.

This case was investigated by ICE. It was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Mandy Riedel and Stacie Harris.

This case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse. Led by United States Attorneys' Offices and the Criminal Division's Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS), Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state, and local resources to better locate, apprehend, and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as to identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.projectsafechildhood.gov.

The investigation that led to this case was part of Operation Predator, a nationwide ICE initiative to identify, investigate and arrest those who prey on children, including human traffickers, international sex tourists, Internet pornographers, and foreign-national predators whose crimes make them deportable. Launched in July 2003, ICE agents have arrested more than 12,800 individuals through Operation Predator. ICE encourages the public to report suspected child predators and any suspicious activity through its toll-free hotline at 1-866-347-2423. This hotline is staffed around the clock by investigators. Suspected child sexual exploitation or missing children may be reported to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, an Operation Predator partner, at 1-800-843-5678 or <http://www.cybertipline.com>.